

In the Claims:

Please cancel and add the following claims as indicated:

Claims 1-20: (canceled)

Claim 21 (new): A character string matching apparatus for effecting a process for matching between a first character string, which comprises a plurality of characters as a result of a recognition of characters, and a second character string, which comprises a plurality of characters stored in a dictionary in advance, comprising:

 a first table for specifying types of the characters appearing in the first character string and orders of the characters appearing in the first character string;

 a second table comprising a memory, in which a calculated value of each of the components of various types of second character strings to be matched with respect to the first character string in the direction of the second character string is stored, the second table being caused to correspond to the orders of appearance and types of the characters specified by the first table;

 voting means for casting a vote to the second table with respect to each of the characters of the first character string which has been input based on a correspondency of the first table with the second table; and

 determining means for determining whether or not the first character string and the second character string are matched based on a result of voting to the second table as a result of the voting by said voting by the voting means executed with respect to all of the characters of the first character string.

Claim 22 (new): The character string matching apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the first character string has recognized characters each having similarity, the second character string includes characters which are registered in a dictionary, and the voting means casts a vote weighted based on the similarity of each of the recognized characters of the first character string.

Claim 23 (new): The character string matching method according to claim 22, wherein the voting means does not cast a vote where the similarity of each the recognized characters of

the first character string is lower than a predetermined level.

Claim 24 (new): The character sting matching apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the first character string includes character candidates each having the priority order, the second character string includes characters which are registered in a dictionary, and the voting means casts votes weighed based on the priority order of the character candidate of the first character string.

Claim 25 (new): A character string matching method for effecting a process for matching between a first character string, which comprises a plurality of characters as a result of a recognition of characters, and a second character string, which comprises a plurality of characters stored in a dictionary in advance, comprising:

- specifying types of the characters appearing in the first character string and orders of the characters appearing in the first character string by a first table;

- causing the second table comprising the memory, in which a calculated value of each of the components of various types of second character strings to be matched with respect to the first character string in the direction of the second character string is stored, to correspond to the orders of appearance and types of the characters specified by the first table;

- casting a vote to the second table with respect to each of the characters of the first character string which has been input, based on a correspondency of the first table with the second table; and

- determining whether or not the first character string and the second character string are matched based on the result of voting to the second table as a result of the voting by said voting by the voting means executed with respect to all of the characters of the first character string.

Claim 26 (new): The character string matching method according to claim 25, comprising:

- the first character string having recognized characters each having similarity;

- the second character string having including characters which are registered in a dictionary; and

- the voting means casting votes weighed based on the degree of similarity of the

recognized characters of the first character string.

Claim 27 (new): The character string matching method according to claim 26, wherein the voting means does not cast a vote where the similarity of each of the recognized characters of the first character string is lower than a predetermined level.

Claim 28 (new): The character string matching method according to claim 25, comprising:
the first character string including character candidates each having the priority order;
the second character string including characters which are registered in a dictionary;
and
the voting means casting votes weighed based on the priority order of the character candidate of the first character string.